



Linda McCulloch, Superintendent

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MontCAS Montana Comprehensive Assessment System October 2006 Newsletter

2006-2007 MontCAS Testing Windows

NOTE: The CRT and CRT-Alt windows have changed.

November 28 – December 19, 2006	English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment, for students with limited English Proficiency (LEP), Grades K-12. More details on pages 7-8 of this issue of <i>JUMP</i> .
January 22-March 2, 2007	NAEP, Grades 4 and 8, Reading and Math. Details in August 2006 <i>JUMP</i> , page 8 http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/JUMP.html
February 12 – March 28, 2007 (was February 13 – March 29)	MontCAS, Phase 2: CRT-Alternate, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math
March 5 – March 28, 2007 (was March 6-29)	MontCAS, Phase 2: CRT, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math
March 22 – April 12, 2007	MontCAS, Phase 1: NRT Grades 4, 8, and 11, Language Arts, Reading, Math, Social Studies, and Science

Assessment Toolbox

The Spring 2007 OPI Statewide Assessment Conference, *The Assessment Toolbox*, will be in Helena at the Red Lion Colonial Inn on April 30 and May 1, 2007.

We are currently asking for participation on the program committee. The committee recommends program strands and speakers and meets by conference call and email.

If you are interested in serving on the program committee, please contact Judy Snow, 406-444-3656 or jsnow@mt.gov.





Testing Contractor Contact Information

MontCAS, Phase 1, the Iowa Tests

Meredith Durgin, Montana Program Manager

meredith_durgin@hmco.com or 800-767-8420 x6094

Carol Taylor Cann, Montana Assessment Consultant

carol_taylor_cann@hmco.com or 800-767-8420 x7113

MontCAS, Phase 2, the CRT and the CRT-Alternate

Sharon Houle, Montana CRT Program Manager

shoule@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901 x2186

Nancy Hall, Montana CRT Program Assistant

nhall@measuredprogress.org or 888-792-2741

Jake Goldsmith, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Manager

JGoldsmith@measuredprogress.org or 800-431-8901 x2239

MontCAS, the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment

Touchstone Applied Science Associates, Inc.

Pamela Demarest, Montana Program Manager

pdemarest@tasa.com or 888-854-9596

Achievement in Montana (AIM)

Student Identifiers

- OPI is pleased to report that, in partnership with Montana school districts, we are making good progress in the first phase of implementing the new Achievement in Montana (AIM) system. OPI, in conjunction with our software vendor, Infinite Campus, is training school personnel on the process for requesting statewide student IDs for students enrolled in their districts.
- OPI has a target date of October 15 for assigning statewide student identifiers to all students so that we can proceed with plans for our first collection using the new system in December.



First Collection Planned for the AIM System

- OPI plans to use the AIM system for the first time in December for the registration of students for MontCAS Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT and CRT-Alt). In the past, each school has been required to submit a file of demographic information to Measured Progress, the state's testing contractor for the CRT, to register the students for the CRT and for CRT and CRT-Alt bar code labels.
- For the 2006-2007 school year, OPI will submit this data directly to Measured Progress from the AIM system. This data transfer from OPI replaces the requirement that districts submit files to Measured Progress. It also eliminates the need for districts to verify demographic data before and after testing.
- Please note that schools will have to submit counts to Measured Progress of the number of students that are expected to take the CRT-Alt. These counts will need to be provided to Measured Progress this Fall. More information on this process will be provided to test coordinators through the JUMP newsletter and e-mails from the OPI State Assessment Director, Judy Snow.

MontCAS, Phase 1, the Iowa Tests and AIM

- The procedures for recording demographic information for students on the Iowa Tests will remain the same as in the past. Systems may continue to bubble information after testing or may purchase bar code service from Riverside Publishing Company as bar codes are not included in the OPI contract with Riverside. The information regarding the purchase of bar code labels will be sent by Riverside to school test coordinators in November 2006.
- The State Student ID Number **will not** be required on the Iowa Tests answer documents.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment and AIM

- Bubbling of some student information before and after testing will be necessary for the first administration of the ELP.
- The State Student ID Number **will be** required information to be bubbled on the student answer booklet for the ELP.

Testing for Private Schools

The Montana Office of Public Instruction administers statewide testing in which all schools accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education are required to participate. In the past, some private schools not accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education have asked to be included in the testing. Within the limits of OPI contracts with testing companies, those private schools may be included.

- During October, the Office of Public Instruction will mail letters and registration forms to all private schools to determine the interest and the contract capacity. December 1, 2006 is the deadline for OPI to receive final confirmation from each school's authorized representative.
- The final confirmation is necessary for materials to be sent to these schools; public and private schools accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education will not have enough materials for students at private schools not accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education. For this reason, if a private school not accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education wishes to participate in statewide testing, that school must register by December 1, 2006.
- County superintendents who receive requests for students who are "home schooled" may continue to include these students in testing. Appropriate coding for both MontCAS Phase 1 and MontCAS Phase 2 is needed to ensure that results for these students are not included in state or system averages.



Participation in MontCAS Test Projects

Again, thank you to the Montana educators who continue to share their time and expertise in MontCAS test development projects from standard setting to item review to developing the science CRT-Alternate.

A generic form to register to participate is online



<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/Forms/06AppParticipate.pdf>

Please download, print, complete and fax it to Judy Snow, 406-444-1373.

Upcoming projects:

- ▶ Week of November 13, 2006: Standard setting for the CRT-Modified. We need grade four regular and special education teachers. Please complete a form and indicate your interest in the CRT-Modified Standard Setting Project.
- ▶ December 14 and 15, 2006: Science Alternate Assessment Benchmarks. We need special education teachers, one each in grades 4, 8, and 10. Please complete a form and indicate your interest in the Science Alternate Assessment Benchmarks Project.
- ▶ There is a space provided on the form for specific projects.

MontCAS, Phase 1

Bar Code Labels

In November 2006, Riverside Publishing Company will mail information to test coordinators about data and bar code labels. Because bar code labels are not included in the state contract, systems planning to use them need to make ordering and purchasing arrangements directly with Riverside.

- Any districts interested in using the barcode labels in 2006 may request a Form A Barcode information packet by contacting Riverside Customer Service at 800-323-9540 now or after information from Riverside arrives.
- Data files will be due to Riverside Publishing by January 9, 2007. Systems that order the bar code labels will receive instructions on compiling data files in Riverside Publishing's *Barcode User's Guide*.
- Reminders:
 - The data submitted to AIM will not be transferred to Riverside Publishing Company.
 - The State Student ID Number **will not** be required on the Iowa Tests answer documents.

MontCAS, Phase 2

CRT and CRT-Alternate Reports



In September, school systems and schools received paper reports mailed by Measured Progress. All discrepancies have been resolved, and, thanks to systems, schools, Measured Progress, and the OPI Measurement and Accountability Division, the number of discrepancies was minor.

- OPI and Measured Progress received many calls about the differences between the number of students in the Summary Reports and the number tested. Some students were excluded from the summary reports such as students not in the district or school the entire year. Students who took the

Alternate were included in the CRT-Alternate summary reports. All students who took the tests receive parent reports and are included on the item roster/level reports.

- A guide for interpreting the reports, *The 2006 CRT Interpretive Guide* is online <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/06InterpGuide.pdf>
- In addition, each system was provided with CDs containing audio three part PowerPoints, *Reading the Reports*. Copies of the PowerPoints (without the audio) are also available online. The links are:
- Part 1
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/06ReadingReportsPart1.ppt>
- Part 2
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/06ReadingReportsPart2.ppt>
- Part 3
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/CRT/06ReadingReportsPart3.ppt>

On October 5, 2006, final data for districts and schools were posted online on *iAnalyze*. In addition to the data, *iAnalyze* provides a tool for examining test results and includes all the released items except for the reading passages.

- The web address is: <http://iservices.measuredprogress.org>
- Please locate your password ahead of time. If you cannot locate it, please contact Judy Snow, 406-444-3656 or jsnow@mt.gov. Your *iAnalyze* site is secure. The passwords also need to remain secure.
- For help using *iAnalyze*, email the Measured Progress Help Desk: ianalyzehelp@measuredprogress.org
- A *Quick Users' Guide* is posted on the *iAnalyze* welcome page. In case you have misplaced your copy, here is the link: <https://mt.ianalyze.measuredprogress.org/iAnalyzeMT/help/iAnalyzeQuickGuide.pdf>

Released Items

The released items from the 2006 CRT and CRT –Alt in grades 3-8 and 10 in Reading and Math are now online.

The CRT released items are by grade and subject and include multiple choice, math short answer, and constructed response items. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase2.html#RI06>

- Constructed response items are by grade and by content.
- Multiple choice and math short answer items are by grade. Both Reading and Math are included in one file per grade.
- Each grade is preceded by an Excel file of answer keys and links to standards.

The CRT-Alt released items are performance indicators by grade and subject for each test.

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase2.html#RIAlt06>

The released item files are large. Please save the files to your desktop before trying to print them. Printing tips are online:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase1.html#print>



Performance Descriptors for Grades 3-8 and 10

For both the CRT and the CRT-Alternate, detailed performance level descriptors were compiled by the standard-setting panels during the summers of 2004 and 2006. These detailed performance level descriptors by content and grade augment the general performance level descriptors included on the 2004, 2005, and 2006 student reports. It is recommended that this information be shared with parents. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase2.html#perfInd>



Released Item/*iAnalyze* Training

The Office of Public Instruction Assessment Office will offer training on the use of the 2006 CRT released items and the online data program *iAnalyze*. A form to request training is online:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/Forms/06TrainRqst.pdf>

If your system is interested in OPI training in November or December 2006 or January 2007, please print the form and fax it to Judy Snow, 406-444-1373.

Please complete the form even if you have already notified OPI of your interest.

CRT-Alternate

As IEP teams meet, they need to consider assessment needs for their students including the CRT-Alternate. Criteria for students to participate in the CRT-Alternate is online

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/SpecED/forms/CRTeligCriteria.pdf>

To provide the appropriate materials for students eligible for the CRT-Alternate, Measured Progress and OPI will provide a system/school/teacher registration in October. Details will be sent to System Test Coordinators and Special Education Directors and Cooperatives.

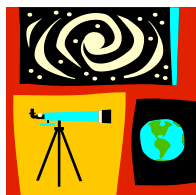
Students taking the CRT-Alternate will be included in the Office of Public Instruction AIM system; however, special bubbling after testing will be required to indicate that the student participated in testing through the CRT-Alternate. More information on this process will be included in Test Coordinator and Administrator Guides.

Thank You

Modified CRT (CRT-M)

Thank you to the students, teachers, schools, and systems that participated in the CRT-Modified pilot in September. Results are being analyzed to determine if a CRT-Modified is a feasible assessment option.

Please thank the students and teachers whose participation will help with important decisions.



CRT and CRT-Alternate Science Tests

As the Montana Science Standards review progresses, OPI, Measured Progress, and Montana educators are working on the development of test blueprints and test items for field or Beta testing beginning in Spring 2007 in anticipation of the first administration of the Science CRT and CRT-Alternate in Spring 2008. The table below shows the timeline.

Test and Grades	Field/Beta Test	First Administration
Science CRT-Alternate, Grades 4, 8, and 10	Beta Test: TBA, Spring or Fall 2007	Spring 2008
Science CRT, Grades 4, 8, and 10	Field Test: Spring 2007. Science field test forms will be included in the test material shipment. The Science field test will consist of two sections in each form (four forms per grade randomly spiraled and shrink wrapped); each section will take approximately 25 minutes, adding 50 minutes to the overall amount of time allotted to testing in grades 4, 8, and 10 in the Spring test administration.	Spring 2008

MontCAS, ELP (English Language Proficiency) Assessment

English Language Proficiency Test Plans

As you know, under the No Child Left Behind Act, an English Language Proficiency test is required for all K-12 students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). OPI has signed a contract with Touchstone Applied Science Associates, Inc. (TASA) of Brewster, New York for the English Language Proficiency Test. The first administration is in November and December 2006.

- Contact information for the testing contractor, TASA:
Pamela Demarest, Montana Program Manager
pdemarest@tasa.com or 888-854-9596
- The following are planned dates for the 2006-07 ELP testing:
 - November 3, 2006: Training materials are mailed to test coordinators
 - November 13, 2006: Testing materials are mailed to test coordinators and a form to order additional materials will be posted online.
 - November 28 – December 19, 2006: Testing Window



- January 10, 2007: Last day to return materials to the testing contractor
- For this ELP administration, there will be no student preidentification bar code labels containing student demographic information; therefore, some information on the answer document will need to be bubbled before and after testing. Included in the required information to be bubbled is the State Student ID Number for each student. Complete directions will be included in the *MontCAS 2006 Examiner Manual*.
- For each grade span (with the exception of Kindergarten), there are two levels of the ELP Assessment:
 - The Beginner Level is for students categorized as LEP1 (students who are in their first year in a U.S. school and/or who have only basic language skills).
 - The Intermediate/Advanced Level is for LEP students who have more than basic language skills.
 - Most LEP students will qualify for the Intermediate/Advanced Level; however, OPI and TASA will provide guidelines for determining the appropriate form.
 - In the October enrollment count, schools include counts of students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Based on that information, the testing contractor and OPI will prepare the Intermediate/Advanced Level materials for distribution.
 - In addition, systems/schools need to identify LEP1 students so the testing contractor can prepare the Beginner Level materials for distribution. The *Fall 2006 LEP1 Student Registration Form* is online <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/Assessment/Forms/06ELPStudentRegFrm.pdf> Please download, print, complete, and fax it to Pamela Demarest at TASA, (866) 460-9778 NO LATER THAN October 20th. Directions and are included on the form. Note: Although the Intermediate/Advanced Level materials will be sent based on the October enrollment, the *Fall 2006 LEP1 Student Registration Form* MUST be submitted to place an order for any Beginner Level materials.
 - Should additional materials be needed, an order form will be available online on November 13. Information will be included with the testing materials shipment.

Please direct questions regarding identification of students with Limited English Proficiency to Lynn Hinch, OPI Bilingual Specialist, lhinch@mt.gov or 406-444-3482.

The Montana ELP assessment is the result of test development in which Montana educators and school participated over the past three years. The procurement process for securing a vendor to conduct the administration and scoring has taken longer than expected resulting in a very limited timeline for the first administration in the fall of this school year, which most districts indicated they preferred. Thank you for your help.

More Assessment Information

Looking Ahead – Closing the Academic Achievement Gap in Montana

Contributed by the OPI Indian Education Division,
Mandy Smoker Broaddus, Indian Education Achievement Specialist

Montana's public schools are home to 16,422 American Indian students, scattered across the state primarily on reservations, in border towns and in the urban cities. These students constitute 11.3% of our K-12 public school population and are the only ethnicity in the state to see significant increases in enrollment in the past five years.



Montana Office of Public Instruction
Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
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www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd

As we enter the 2006-07 school year, it is important to **acknowledge, consider, and move forward** in closing the achievement gap that exists for the majority of our American Indian students.

Acknowledge what the data tell us –
NRT – 4, 8, and 11 combined (2004-05)

	Average % scoring proficient and advanced in Reading	Average % scoring proficient and advanced in Math
American Indian	49%	48%
White	79%	78%

CRT – 4, 8, and 10 combined (2004-05)

	Average % scoring proficient and advanced in Reading	Average % scoring proficient and advanced in Math
American Indian	39%	28%
White	72%	63%

Consider –

American Indian students have traditionally underperformed in all categories on standardized tests in Montana since their inception. The trend data demonstrates that for our American Indian students we have an academic achievement crisis on our hands.

It is also important to consider that in the past five years on the NRT test, American Indian students math scores have improved in the 4th and 8th grades. Also, that from the 2003-04 to 2004-05 school year 4th grade American Indian students' reading scores rose 11%. What have individual districts done to see these types of improvements in student scores – how can we build upon these successes? And what hasn't worked in our schools – how can we adapt or try something new to meet our student's needs?

Move forward –

The Office of Public Instruction encourages local districts to gather and analyze data from multiple assessment measures, including the CRT, to better understand the complete picture of student achievement in their schools. Once trends over time, gaps, or links to specific programs, services or strategies have been made, districts can make more informed decisions about the future. It is also important to share data information with all stakeholders so that plans for improvement and district needs can be mutual and aligned efforts.

The OPI is working diligently on behalf of and with local districts on these issues. It is the right of every Montana student to have equality of educational opportunity. Superintendent McCulloch and the OPI are equally committed to this equality and to closing this achievement gap. Please contact the Indian Education Division (444-3694) and visit us on the web for more information regarding current initiatives and further assistance:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd/Index.html>.

With the future of Montana in mind, let's work together, reinvigorate ideas and try new ones to improve the educational experience for our American Indian students.

TO KEEP OR NOT TO KEEP

The OPI Assessment Office receives frequent questions on what records/tests need to be kept.



Beverly Marlow of the OPI Legal Division contributed this information. Montana law provides that student records are to be kept permanently. 20-1-212, MCA. Administrative rule defines what the student's permanent record must include at ARM 10.55.909. Subsection (1)(e) provides that records related to the student's level of achievement must be kept permanently which includes grades and standardized achievement test results or what we refer to as the NRT and CRT and CRT-Alternate.

Link to ARM: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/arm/55chapter.pdf>

If you have additional questions, please contact:

Beverly J. Marlow, 406-444-3172 , bemarlow@mt.gov

Contact Information

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Judy Snow, State Assessment Director
406-444-3656 jsnow@mt.gov